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2,000 ENTREPRENEURS TO GET A BREAK ON THEIR FIRST LICENSE

Latest small business reform helps businesses launch and grow

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) Commissioner Rosa Escareno today announced new support for an estimated 2,000 entrepreneurs who are trying to launch or grow a business, as part of Mayor Rahm Emanuel's small business reforms to support small businesses by cutting red tape, improving transparency and encouraging innovation in every part of the city. Starting this month, BACP will offer new business applicants a two-year limited business license for \$125, the price of a one-year license.

"In reducing this fee we hope to lighten the financial burden Chicago's entrepreneurs face and support their new businesses launch and growth," said Mayor Emanuel. "Small businesses are the bedrock of our communities, and through this reform we hope to show small business owners that the city supports you and we are here to help you succeed."

The new business Limited Business License fee reduces the cost of a start-up license fee by half, from \$250 to \$125. The reduction applies to:

- New Limited Business License applicants
- Existing Limited Business licensees who are expanding by adding a new business location
- Existing Limited Business licensees who are moving to a new location

"Entrepreneurs face many financial burdens as they work hard to open their businesses and invest in their communities," says BACP Commissioner Escareno. "While we realize the license fee is just one of many expenses, we do not want the cost of this fee to be an impediment to success."

The idea was presented by Lisa and Mark Borelli, members of the Chicago Mayoral Business Council, launched in March.

"Entrepreneurs and business owners face many challenges," said Lisa and Mark Borelli, owners of Borelli Pizza in Chicago's Lincoln Square Neighborhood. "We appreciate that the Mayor and BACP

heard our concerns and took quick action to reduce the burden to new small business owners via license fee reduction. The license reduction helps new start-up businesses an opportunity to boost our bottom-line. Efforts like this are encouraging and let us know the City has our backs.”

These new initiatives are part of the Mayor’s ongoing commitment to make small business growth, community investment and economic development a priority of his administration. Over the past seven years, efforts to support small business and spur economic growth and innovation include:

- Numerous license fees have been reduced, benefitting 10,000 business owners.
- The new sidewalk café ordinance expands the outdoor season to 12-months a year and allows the more than 1,200 restaurant owners with sidewalk cafes to increase their profit season without increasing their permit cost.
- License reform has cut the total number of business licenses from 117 to 40.
- Inspection streamlining has reduced the number of inspections for more than 2,000 businesses and helped businesses open an average of 30 days faster.
- The Restaurant Startup Program has more than doubled health inspection passage rates and helped participating restaurants open an average of 45 days faster than before the program was instituted in 2012.
- Today, more than 70 delegate agencies called Neighborhood Business Development Centers bring indispensable business support to the neighborhoods.
- More than \$11 million has been invested in 108 South and West Side businesses through the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund and Retail Thrive Zones programs.

New business owners can apply for a license in person at the BACP office in City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle Street, Room #800, or online at www.cityofchicago.org/sbc. For in-person consultations, an appointment is recommended and can be made by calling 312-74-GOBIZ (312) 744-6249.

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